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Vice President Chen addresses international review of 2nd ROC reports on implementation of human rights covenants

An international review of the Republic of China's second set of reports regarding its implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is being conducted January 16 to 18 at the Chang Yung-fa Foundation in Taipei. Ten internationally renowned experts who have participated in UN human rights protection efforts for many years have been invited to join the review panel. Panelists will engage in extensive and in-depth discussions with ROC government officials and representatives of domestic and foreign human rights groups on important human rights issues in Taiwan.

At the opening ceremony, ROC Vice President Chen Chien-jen stated that the ROC has published two sets of reports on compliance with the two covenants since they were implemented in Taiwan in 2009, noting that the second international review begins today. He observed that the ROC government has made immense progress and achieved considerable success in its advancement and protection of human rights since the first

set of reports were issued four years ago. He hoped that the current mode of review will enable the international community to better understand the ROC's efforts and accomplishments and that the government will build its administration on realizing democracy, the rule of law, and protection of human rights.

Vice President Chen also stated that although the ROC is unable to participate in the UN human rights mechanism, it has incorporated the covenants in its domestic law. Of the nine core UN international human rights instruments, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was signed and ratified by the ROC prior to its loss of representation in the UN, and put into effect in 1971. Implementation acts have been introduced for five other human rights instruments in recent years, namely, the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Three other conventions remain to be incorporated into domestic law—the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The competent authorities are proactively preparing the domestic legalization of these conventions. Our goal is for the entire citizenry to enjoy democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, and for

the ROC to become a benchmark for human rights in Asia.

One human rights expert who is unable to attend this review in person has been closely following the development of human rights in the ROC and has made many valuable suggestions. Another expert, Professor Nisuke Ando, who participated in the review of the ROC's first set of reports, submitted a list of questions for the review panel before he passed away in December 2016. Minister of Justice Chiu Tai-san, head of the ROC government delegation, paid tribute to Professor Ando and expressed gratitude for his contribution to the ROC's implementation of the covenants.

The two covenants and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are the most important UN documents on human rights. Their implementation is pertinent to every individual. Topics under review include labor rights, land justice, rights and interests of indigenous peoples, right to an adequate standard of living, fair trials, and freedom of speech. The review sessions are being broadcast live on a dedicated website (with simultaneous interpretation, including sign language). Those interested in the ROC's human rights are welcome to visit the website: http://www.2017twccprcescr.tw/second_meeting2.html.